

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 SAA-01 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EUR-12 ACDA-12
/094 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:L E:PDW
APPROVED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER
NEA/P:GSHERMAN (SUBSTANCE)
-----111103 121854Z /46
O 121827Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE RE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND
REPORTED ISRAELI SHIPMENTS TO CHRISTIAN MILITIAS

1. FOLLOWING IS CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE PROVIDED
DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN FOR USE AT NOON BRIEFING JULY 12.
SUBJECT DID NOT COME UP AT BRIEFING. -

2. BEGIN TEXT:
QUESTION: WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN LEBANON? WHAT IS THE
STATUS OF THE CEASE-FIRE IN EAST BEIRUT?

ANSWER: THE CEASE-FIRE IS STILL HOLDING, ALTHOUGH THERE
ARE FIRING INCIDENTS FROM TIME TO TIME. WE ARE ENCOURAGED
THAT THERE APPEAR TO BE VERY SERIOUS EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO
NEGOTIATE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD REDUCE TENSIONS.
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AS IS ALREADY WELL KNOWN, WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MANY
QUARTERS IN REGARD TO THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT AND IN
LEBANON GENERALLY.

AS THE SECRETARY SAID MONDAY, WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON SEEING
TO IT THAT THE CEASE-FIRE HOLDS, AND THEN MOVE ON TO SEE
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT STABILITY INTO THE

SITUATION. AS THE SECRETARY SAID, ONE WAY TO BRING ABOUT STABILITY WOULD BE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ARMS THAT ARE PRESENT AND ALSO TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE.

CONSISTENT WITH THIS POSITION, WE WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY LARGE-SCALE INTRODUCTION OF NEW ARMS INTO LEBANON, SINCE THIS WOULD WORK AGAINST THE EFFORTS NOW UNDER WAY TO DEFUSE THE SERIOUS SITUATION.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON REPORTS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE SUPPLYING ARMS BY SEA TO THE CHRISTIANS? ARE AMERICAN ARMS INVOLVED?

ANSWER: AS I HAVE SAID, WE WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY LARGE-SCALE INTRODUCTION OF NEW ARMS INTO LEBANON, SINCE THIS WOULD WORK AGAINST THE EFFORTS NOW UNDER WAY TO DEFUSE THE SERIOUS SITUATION.

IF PRESSED: WE ALSO HAVE SEEN REPORTS THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE SUPPLYING ARMS BY SEA TO THE MARONITE FORCES. WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO COMMENT FURTHER FOR THE MOMENT UNTIL WE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO TALK AGAIN WITH THE ISRAELIS.

IF PRESSED FURTHER: OF COURSE, OUR POSITION ON THE TRANSFER OF U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT IS WELL KNOWN.
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SOME WEEKS AGO AN ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE GAVE US RENEWED ASSURANCES THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT TRANSFER TO ANY GROUP IN LEBANON U.S.-ORIGIN MILITARY EQUIPMENT SUBJECT TO OUR LAW AND AGREEMENTS WITH ISRAEL WHICH PROHIBIT THE TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT TO THIRD PARTIES WITHOUT OUR SPECIFIC APPROVAL. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY EVIDENCE THAT WOULD CAUSE US TO DOUBT THESE ASSURANCES. END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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